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District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MEXICAN POLICE OFFICER SENTENCED TO 1 YEAR IN PRISON FOR CONSPIRACY TO EXPORT FIREARMS TO MEXICO

PHOENIX, Ariz. – Pedro Rios-Perez, age 42, a Police Officer for the State of Baja California, Mexico, was sentenced here on August 28, 2006, to one year in prison, by U.S. District Judge Earl H. Carroll. On June 8, 2006, Rios-Perez pleaded guilty to the felony offenses of Conspiracy and Alien in Possession of Firearms.

U.S. Attorney Paul K. Charlton said, "No one is above the law, particularly police officers whose job it is to uphold and enforce the law. Today's sentence of imprisonment sends a clear message to all public officials that there are serious consequences to illegal acts along our border."

Rios-Perez was originally arrested in California on January 7, 2006, and subsequently charged by Indictment in Arizona. In the course of his guilty plea, Rios-Perez, a non-resident alien and citizen of Mexico, admitted that on January 7, 2006, he and co-conspirator traveled to a gun show in Yuma, Arizona, and purchased an Olympic Arms .223 caliber, semi-automatic rifle, two Smith and Wesson 9 mm semi-automatic pistols, and ammunition. The two conspirators then hid the ammunition and three firearms in a truck in Yuma and then attempted to illegally export them to Mexico. The ammunition and handguns were hidden in the truck's air filter and the rifle was hidden behind the truck's front seat. The vehicle was assigned to Rios-Perez by his employer, a Mexican law enforcement agency. Prior to attempting to crossing the border, Rios-Perez covered up his vehicle's official markings with an opaque material and tape. The two conspirators then traveled from Yuma to the Andrade Port of Entry. The firearms and ammunition were found in the vehicle by federal law enforcement officials as the two attempted to leave the United States and cross into Mexico at the international border. At the time Rios-Perez possessed the firearms, he was an alien in the United States who did not have legal authorization to receive or possess the weapons.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Bureau of Customs, and Border Protection, and Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The prosecution is being handled by Frederick A. Battista, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Ariz.

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